

FISH SCREEN CRITERIA

POSED PROBLEM: Some diverters have expressed a reluctance to screen their diversions because the federal and state agencies with regulatory responsibilities have different fish screen criteria and the diverters feel they may be unable to comply with the various, and possibly conflicting requirements.

CURRENT SITUATION: Each agency recognizes that specific screen projects require individual evaluation and their fish screen specifications contain adequate flexibility to adjust to different needs (different species, different hydrologic conditions, etc.). Specifications generally include requirements for screen location in still waters, vertical intake location and angle of placement relative to flow in running waters, water velocities approaching and sweeping past the screen, distribution of velocities along the screen, size and total relative area of screen openings, construction materials, bypass location, operation and maintenance, etc. Our analysis indicates that existing agency specifications are fairly consistent, differing in minor details of mesh size and sweeping velocity, and in the level of detail at which they prescribe operations. The fish species in the area to be protected usually drive the performance standards required of the facility which, in turn, dictate the specific screen criteria. Generally, the agency criteria which are the most stringent for the protection of the fish species in the area of the diversion are required and accepted by all of the resource and regulatory agencies.

Historically, the regulatory agencies all work together with diverters and come to agreement on the screen criteria to be used at a particular diversion site prior to any construction occurring. We are unable to document any instance in which differing and/or conflicting fish screen criteria have prevented a specific project from being implemented.

PROPOSAL: Although we are unable to document that differences in existing agency criteria have been an impediment to approval and construction of screen projects, it would be ideal if we could achieve a formal consensus among the regulatory agencies on performance standards and a common set of acceptable screen criteria. We propose that the Anadromous Fish Screen Program, through both its Interagency Technical Team and its Interagency Steering (Policy) Committee take the lead in bringing together the appropriate agencies to see if this can be done. These groups will address both anadromous fish and non-anadromous resident fish. Even if we are unsuccessful in reaching agreement on performance standards and a common set of criteria, we would at least be able to identify and make the diverting community aware of the minimum standards that would be acceptable to all of the agencies.

METHOD OF EXPEDITING FISH SCREEN PROJECTS: Diverters intending to screen their diversions should involve all of the regulatory agencies in their projects as soon as possible. We suggest the Anadromous Fish Screen Program as the most logical and readily available forum to accomplish this coordination.

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